

DANCE

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

PERFORMANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY

Ballet
Modern
Jazz
Tap
Hip-Hop
Theater Dance
Culturally-Specific Dance

EMPLOYERS

Performing arts companies:
Dance
Theatre
Opera
Touring
Broadway
Off Broadway
Television and motion picture industries and studios including:
Television shows
Commercials
Movies
Music videos
Amusement and recreation venues:
Theme parks
Cruise ships
Resorts
Casinos
Restaurants
Sporting events
Self-employed/freelance work

STRATEGIES

Begin formal training in classical dance and later move towards a particular style.
Join campus and community organizations dedicated to dance. Volunteer as much as possible.
Prepare for professional auditions by participating in dance competitions and enrolling in summer training programs and workshops.
Rehearse on a regular basis to stay in top form.
Maintain good health and physical stamina.
Obtain formal training in vocal performance and drama.
Develop a broad understanding of music, literature, history, and other arts to help interpret ideas and feelings in dance.
Although completing a college degree is not essential for a career as a professional dancer, it is necessary for many other dance related occupations.
Opportunities are limited for full time work. Many dancers hold other jobs.
Understand that dancers may work long and late hours since many rehearsals and productions are in the evenings.
Prepare to relocate to areas with higher concentrations of art and dance related employers such as New York City, Boston, Atlanta, Chicago, and Los Angeles.
For choreography positions, consider the following:
Seek formal training and experience in dancing first.
Serve as choreographer for local dance schools and camps and for student performances on campus.
Accumulate years of dance experience to build a professional reputation.
Develop expertise in music, costuming, and staging.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

EDUCATION

Formalized Instruction
Recreational or Self-Enrichment Instruction

K-12 schools, public and private
Colleges and universities
Private dance studios and schools
Conservatories
Performing arts camps
Community agencies
Adult education and continuing education programs
Physical fitness centers
Recreation centers/clubs

Acquire a teaching certificate for public school teaching. Learn about requirements by state.
Earn a graduate degree to teach in higher education and many conservatories. Specialize in an area such as ballet, modern, jazz, etc.
Develop strong communication skills and teaching ability through coursework and campus activities.
Gain experience working with children through volunteer or part-time work.
Become proficient in many styles and forms of dance.

ADMINISTRATION

Arts Management
Company Management
Artistic Direction/Rehearsal Direction
Promotion
Tour Management
Facilities Management
Event Planning
Booking
Public Relations
Marketing
Dance Accreditation

Cultural organizations and arts councils
Theaters and arts venues
Dance companies
Dance studios and academies
Musical theater production companies
Dance festivals
National Endowment for the Arts

Pursue education in arts management, business, or non-profit management.
Join organizations that plan and host campus cultural attractions and entertainment events.
Develop administrative, leadership, and organizational skills.
Participate in internships and/or volunteer activities to gain related experience.
Learn how to write grants and to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.

DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPY

Dance therapists work with individuals, couples, families, or groups using both verbal counseling techniques and movement interventions.

Schools and special education settings
Nursing homes
Rehabilitation facilities
Psychiatric and medical hospitals
Community mental health agencies
Wellness centers
Alternative health centers
Private practice

Take courses in psychology, social work, education, or child and family studies along with developing a broad education in dance.
A master's degree in dance/movement therapy, counseling, or psychology and a clinical internship in dance therapy are required. After completion, you hold the Dance Therapist Registered (DTR) designation.
Learn to work well with many types of people and develop excellent communication skills.
Volunteer in a rehabilitation setting.
Join the American Dance Therapy Association.
Consider an undergraduate degree in recreation therapy for a wider range of job prospects.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

MEDIA

Dance Writing
Dance Criticism
Dance History

Newspapers
Magazines
Websites
Book publishers

Develop excellent writing and editing skills along with knowledge of the history and culture of dance.

Write for campus or local newspapers. Create a portfolio of writing samples, especially those that have been published.

Seek opportunities for recognition and networking through writing contests and freelance writing submissions.

Learn HTML and other computer programs to prepare for online work. This area of journalism is growing while print is declining.

Become comfortable working in a deadline-oriented atmosphere.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Because of keen competition in the field, dancers and choreographers often go through periods of unemployment. Develop other skills that qualify you for alternative work when between dance jobs.
- Dance is a physically demanding profession; many dancers stop performing in their late thirties and transition to other related fields.
- Perseverance, self-discipline, and patience are important traits to cultivate along with physical stamina and creative abilities.
- Learn how to deal with rejection and criticism as these can be common when auditioning for jobs.
- Join a relevant union or guild to be eligible for work assignments.
- Internships with dance companies or theater groups can provide experience and networking opportunities. The National Dance Association offers internships and volunteer positions.
- Some students may pursue the Master of Fine Arts in Dance to further their careers in performance or choreography. Others will earn a Master of Arts to pursue careers in dance history, dance critique, or arts management. The bachelor's degree can also serve as preparation for a variety of other graduate programs including law and business.
- Students pursuing a degree in dance may choose to work outside the field of performing arts. Many career areas, such as sales and management, are open to people from nearly any discipline if they have developed transferable skills and sought relevant experience. Learn how to discuss and demonstrate these skills to potential employers in interviews.
- Some niche areas exist within the dance industry such as dance notation and reconstruction which is typically done by freelancers or dance professors.